

provide training for the workforce required in these new endeavors.

In Division E, covering the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Village of Mt. Morris will receive \$500,000 from the State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Project account. The Village of Mt. Morris is located at 105 West Lincoln Street in Mt. Morris, Illinois, 60154. The Honorable Gregory Unger is the Village President of Mt. Morris. The Village of Mt. Morris is planning to design and build a new wastewater treatment plant that will replace the current facility, which is approximately 125 years old. The Illinois EPA has also imposed new operating requirements that will not be met by the current physical condition of the present system. The total estimated cost of the new system to meet 50 year growth projections is approximately \$7.5 million. Federal funding is a critical component of the funding package needed to help get this project designed, and moving forward to construction.

In Division F, covering the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS), I secured three separate earmarks. First, under the Higher Education account, Rockford College will receive \$238,000 to equip classrooms and science laboratories with technology to significantly enhance student learning. Rockford College is located at 5050 East State Street in Rockford, Illinois, 61108. Mr. John McNamara is the Vice President of College Development. Federal funding is critical to help upgrade nine antiquated classrooms and two laboratories at Rockford College and convert them to modern smart learning centers. This is a joint request with Senator RICHARD DURBIN.

Second, under the Health Resources and Services Administration account, the Crusader Clinic in Rockford, Illinois, will receive \$238,000 to help fund a new electronic health records (EHR) system. The Crusader Clinic is located at 1200 West State Street in Rockford, Illinois 61102. Mr. Gordon Eggers, Jr., is the President and CEO. The Crusader Clinic is a community health center that serves multiple counties in northern Illinois and provides care to over 40,000 low-income, uninsured, and underinsured patients annually in the region. Because of the growing patient caseload and new federal requirements, this community health clinic now has a great need to implement an EHR system throughout their clinics at an estimated cost of \$1 million. This funding will help improve the delivery of medical care to those who would otherwise use the emergency room at local hospitals. This is also a joint request with Senator RICHARD DURBIN.

Third, also under the Health Resources and Services Administration account, the University of Illinois' College of Medicine in Rockford, Illinois will receive \$238,000 to help build the National Center for Rural Health Professions. The Rockford campus is located at 1601 Parkview Avenue in Rockford, Illinois, 61107. Dr. Martin Lipsky is the Dean of the Rockford campus of the U of I College of Medicine. The Center will conduct research, develop curricula, implement and evaluate rural medical and health care education models, provide consultation to other medical colleges, and study trends in rural health related to health professional training needs. Medical colleges throughout the U.S. can use the research findings and curriculum models to implement

training for rural health professionals to practice in medically under-served rural areas in their respective states. The College of Medicine has raised \$4 million in private funds toward this \$32 million expansion project. Another \$14 million has been committed by the University of Illinois, and the university is also seeking state funding to complete the project.

In Division I, covering the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Transportation, I secured two separate earmarks. First, under the Economic Development Initiatives account at HUD, the City of Freeport, Illinois will receive \$237,500 for various public infrastructure improvements. The City of Freeport is located at 230 West Stephenson Street in Freeport, Illinois, 61032. The Honorable George Gaulrapp is the Mayor of Freeport. Freeport wants to make improvements to public infrastructure in the downtown area to promote and support expansion of manufacturing facilities. The funds would be used for a variety of infrastructure improvements, including replacing a water main, upgrading and "undergrounding" above-ground power lines, and various roadway and streetscape upgrades in downtown Freeport to make it a more attractive place to live and work.

Second, McHenry County, Illinois will receive \$570,000 under the Transportation, Community, and System Preservation account to widen Rakow Road. The County of McHenry is located at 2200 Seminary Avenue in Woodstock, Illinois. Mr. Peter Austin is the County Administrator of McHenry County. This road project will help relieve traffic congestion and improve safety by increasing capacity to Rakow Road from Ackman Road to Illinois Route 31 by adding two or three through lanes in each direction and adequate turn lanes at the intersections. In 2004 and 2005, there were 566 accidents (71 percent were rear-end collisions) and 171 injuries at this three mile stretch of highway that desperately needs improvement. This request also begins to implement the \$5.72 million authorization for this project that I secured as part of the 2005 Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act (Public Law 109-59).

Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Representative DAVID OBEY, and the Ranking Minority Member, Representative JERRY LEWIS, and the respective leadership of the six Appropriations subcommittees for working with me in a bipartisan manner to include these nine requests in this spending bill. I also want to thank Senator RICHARD DURBIN, the senior Senator from Illinois, for joining with me on three of these requests.

RECOGNIZING THE THIRD ANNUAL CESAR CHAVEZ MARCH

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 22nd anniversary of the naming of Chavez Drive in my hometown of Flint, Michigan. To honor this occasion, and to celebrate the 82nd anniversary of Cesar Chavez's birthday, the Hispanic Latino Collaborative of

Genesee County is sponsoring a Citizens March on March 28th along Chavez Drive. The march will be followed by a reception and luncheon on the campus of the University of Michigan-Flint.

After his family lost their farm during the Great Depression, Cesar Chavez spent his childhood as a migrant worker following the crops across the Southwest. After serving in the United States Navy during World War II, Cesar returned to farm work and began his lifelong quest to bring justice, equality and dignity to migrant workers throughout our Nation. He adopted the nonviolent philosophy of Gandhi and founded the United Farm Workers of America. In the face of formidable odds he persevered and after a 5 year struggle against California grape growers, Cesar Chavez won the first union contract for migrant workers and brought about respect for the workers toiling in our fields.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is awarded to persons that have served democracy and advanced the universal interests of humanity. The list of recipients is an honor roll of individuals that have struggled against adversity for the common good. In 1994, as he posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Cesar Chavez, President Clinton said, "He was for his own people a Moses figure." Cesar Chavez exemplified compassion, dedication and advocacy for farm workers everywhere. He passed away 1 year earlier leaving our world better than he found it.

Madam Speaker, Flint Michigan was the first community in our Nation to honor this great humanitarian by naming a street after Cesar Chavez. I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Hispanic Latino Collaborative for honoring the memory of Cesar Chavez and his legacy to the American people.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today during National Peace Corps week to honor the immeasurable contributions of the more than 195,000 Americans who have volunteered to serve in 139 countries in the cause of peace since 1961. Through mutual respect and understanding, these men and women have committed themselves to improving our country's relationships with the rest of the world, and I applaud their dedication to communities around the globe.

When President John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps 48 years ago, he set out to provide ordinary men and women with an opportunity to strengthen developing countries devastated by the effects of poverty, disease, and war. Volunteers have come from all walks of life, some with years of experience and some just out of college.

Peace Corps volunteers have mobilized to combat some of the world's most urgent humanitarian crises, including providing crucial assistance to communities in need of post-conflict relief and reconstruction as well as countries overwhelmed by natural disasters. These men and women have helped economically depressed communities develop new

business plans, struggling farmers improve their crop production, and families devastated by HIV/AIDS receive the care they need.

Currently, volunteers are serving in 76 countries, providing development assistance while fostering new bonds of friendship and seeking common ways to address global challenges. Over 400 men and women have volunteered from California's Sixth District, including the following current volunteers: Samantha Atkins, Gail Bachman, Tracey Bloch, Jamie Bowen, Catherine Carlton, John Cervetto, Rebecca Como, Jed D'Abravanel, Fionah Dominis, Jillian Geissler, Emilie Greenhalgh Stam, Daniel Grinnell, Alexis Guild, James Gurney, Amy Howland, Larissa Hsia-Wong, David Hughes, Frank Lester, Ryan Loughlin, Alissa Mayer, Reid Miller, Ryan Reichert, NurAliyya Shelley, Robin Smith, Jessica Souza, and Jessica Wright.

Madam Speaker, the 48th anniversary of the establishment of the Peace Corps is an achievement that we should all commemorate. I celebrate the leadership and accomplishments of these compassionate Americans who have committed themselves to promoting global peace, diplomacy, and understanding.

FEMA INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 2009

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I am proud today to introduce H.R. 1174, the "FEMA Independence Act of 2009", a bill to re-establish the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") as an independent, cabinet-level agency reporting directly to the President.

This bill restores FEMA's ability to be a nimble and effective response agency, re-instates FEMA's role in building basic emergency management capability around the country, and removes FEMA from the large bureaucracy within the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") that has hindered the agency's disaster response and recovery efforts for six years.

On March 1, 2003, President Bush delegated to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security the responsibility for administering the Federal Government's assistance to States and local governments whose citizens and communities are affected by disasters, and subsumed the Federal Emergency Management Agency into the newly-created Department of Homeland Security.

Since 2003, FEMA has failed the American people. Hurricane Katrina remains foremost in our minds. It is shameful that, to this day, many citizens and communities in Louisiana have still not recovered from the disaster. Beyond Hurricane Katrina, FEMA's performance has continued to be deficient, such as in the agency's inadequate response to the discovery of formaldehyde in FEMA trailers, a serious threat to public health. More recently, residents in Texas experienced significant shortcomings in the delivery of recovery assistance, including debris removal and housing, in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike. Today, the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Emergency Management, and Public Buildings is holding yet another hearing on the status of

recovery efforts in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas from these hurricanes. The fact that there are still individuals and communities in need demonstrates that dramatic improvements that can and must be made to the Federal government's provision of disaster assistance and leadership in emergency management.

Oversight hearings since 2003 held by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure have shown a clear correlation between the absorption of FEMA into DHS and the deterioration of FEMA's effectiveness. One reason for this trend is that since becoming a part of DHS, FEMA's emergency management mission has been distorted by a focus on terrorism. Key Federal grant programs that previously helped build basic emergency management and fire fighting capability in communities around the country are now made available only if applicants can show a nexus to terrorism. In the last six years, the Federal Government has spent ten times more on terrorism preparedness (nearly \$15 billion) than on core emergency management preparedness (\$1.5 billion). Yet since 2000, the President has declared only two disasters because of terrorist attacks, but nearly 500 disasters due to natural hazards.

Further, quick decision-making and the flexibility to shift course as events change are two fundamental hallmarks of successful emergency management. Within DHS, FEMA officials have had to run all decisions through the Secretary of Homeland Security. FEMA has also had to work through the Secretary to access non-FEMA Federal resources in a response effort. These additional layers, which did not exist when FEMA was an independent agency, cause delays, impact the speed and flexibility of services that are provided to citizens and communities, and add unnecessary obstacles following a disaster. Being subsumed in a DHS bureaucracy has impaired FEMA's ability to carry out its mission quickly and effectively.

Since 2003, DHS has centralized disaster response and recovery capabilities at the Federal level, which has shut out FEMA's partnerships with State and local governments, and undermined the emergency management system. DHS has also created separate functions under the direct control of the Secretary to perform functions that by law are the sole responsibility of FEMA, such as pre-designation of individuals to serve as Principal Federal Officials ("PFOs") for disasters during the 2008 Hurricane season. Since its incorporation into DHS, FEMA has also had to rely increasingly on support from contractors, due to a loss of experienced FEMA personnel and a reduction of emergency management capacity at the State and local level as the focus of emergency management grant funding has shifted to terrorism-preparedness programs.

For these reasons, I have long opposed the incorporation of FEMA into DHS. During House consideration of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, I said:

This is July 2002. Let us fast forward to July 2003. The majority has prevailed. FEMA is a box in the mammoth bureaucracy of the Department of Homeland Security. Flood waters are swirling around your city. You call for help. You get the Department of Homeland Security. The switchboard sends your call to the Under Secretary's office which looks up "disaster" on their organizational chart and sends

you to the Congressional Liaison Office, which then promises to get a message back to you in 24 hours. Eventually, they find FEMA, by which time you are stranded on the roof of your house waving a white handkerchief and screaming for help. FEMA, the word comes back, sorry, is looking for suspected terrorists some place and will get back to you as soon as we can.

Unfortunately, we have seen these predictions come true. Unless FEMA is re-established as an independent, cabinet-level agency, I expect this history to repeat itself.

After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Congress enacted changes to try to fix the problems plaguing FEMA by enhancing the agency's authority within the Department of Homeland Security. Unfortunately, these changes have done little to restore the type of robust emergency management agency that is needed at the Federal level. Tinkering around the edges will not work; fixing this flawed system requires fundamental change. This bill takes the most important and necessary first step to fix the problem—re-instating FEMA as an independent agency.

Specifically, H.R. 1174 affirms FEMA's mission to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the United States from all hazards, by leading and supporting a comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

As prescribed by the bill, an independent FEMA will be led by an Administrator and a Deputy Administrator with extensive experience in emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation from hazards. The bill maintains and strengthens FEMA's regional structure of ten regional offices and three area offices. Each regional office will be led by a Regional Administrator with a demonstrated ability in and knowledge of emergency management.

The bill provides for the transfer of core emergency management programs and functions to the newly independent FEMA, including: FEMA's disaster assistance programs authorized by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act; the National Flood Insurance Program; the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program; the National Dam Safety Program; the U.S. Fire Administration; the Emergency Food and Shelter Program; and FEMA's programs for Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government.

The bill does not transfer any grant programs, currently administered by FEMA, that are specific to terrorism, such as the Urban Area Security Initiative and the State Homeland Security Grant Program. This will ensure that the Department of Homeland Security will continue to lead our Nation's efforts to prevent and protect against terrorist incidents and attacks.

The bill further requires the FEMA Administrator to maintain the National Advisory Council and to retain a Disability Coordinator within the newly-established entity; continues the authorization of the National Integration Center within FEMA; and ensures that FEMA will proceed on the development of standards for credentialing and typing in collaboration with the administrators of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact and other State, local, and tribal entities. Each of these activities is currently authorized and being implemented by FEMA.